



St. Nicholas Pageant (short version)

Tells the Nativity Story

by Deborah Dresser, Diocese of New York, for the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

This is a shortened version of the [full nativity pageant](#), in which St. Nicholas tells his own stories along with the Christmas story.

A Full Version of the St. Nicholas Pageant complete with the Nativity Story enacted as also available through this website.

Grace Episcopal Church, Traverse City, Michigan

Pageant Notes.

In this pageant St. Nicholas tells both his story and the nativity story. It also makes the connection between our beloved saint and the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and provides for an offering for the children of the Holy Land.

The pageant takes about 30 minutes to perform depending on the amount of music used. St. Nicholas should be played by an energetic and loving person with an air of mystery. The text does not need to be memorized by the actor. A large decorated book holding the script works well, but the actor needs to be very familiar with the text. As there are a number of long monologues, the performance is enhanced by mimes that will enact the stories being told by Nicholas. For costuming and other ideas to enliven your St. Nicholas celebration see www.stnicholascenter.org. There is lots of room for creativity, so have fun.

Characters

St. Nicholas

5 mimes

Children who take up the collection for the AFEDJ

Prelude Music

Welcome- The Host of the Pageant welcomes the people. The Host might be the Rector of the parish or some other person in leadership.

Host Welcome all to our St. Nicholas pageant on this special day, December 6th, the feast day of this great saint. Before we begin I would like to thank _____ and to invite you all to a Nicholas feast following our pageant (tell them where).

December 6th is also the Sunday we shine a light on the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. The American Friends for over twenty years has supported this Episcopal Diocese whose presence is in Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The diocese has twenty-seven parishes with thirty-seven educational and medical institutions that minister to Palestinian Christians and Muslims alike. The collection that will be taken for the children of the

Holy Land will be offered in the generous spirit of St. Nicholas and sent directly to the Diocese of Jerusalem.

And now let the festivities begin.

There is a loud knock on the front door of the church and the Host invites St. Nicholas to enter.

Welcome Nicholas of Myra, welcome on your festival day.

Music *See below for a sample of an opening hymn. More are to found on www.stnicholassociety.org*

It is preferable that the actual singing of the hymn happen after St. Nicholas has made his entrance.

Nicholas enters with great flourish. He bows to the audience as he makes his way forward to his place of storytelling. This should be a grand chair such as a bishop uses.

A SONG OF SAINT NICHOLAS

There was a good bishop who lived long ago
His memory is glorious, His legends are bold
We call him St Nicholas, a servant of Christ
Who loved little children and taught what was right

He is Father Christmas and Santa Claus too
He helped many people, the stories are true
At Christmas he calls to us, both young and old
To see that the story of Jesus is told

The gifts that he brings us are signs of the love
That comes down at Christmas from heaven above
We see Mother Mary, the babe in the stall,
With Joseph, the wise men and shepherds and all

O blessed St Nik'las we hail you today
The patron of many, you show us the way
To be good and generous, to help those in need
To be kind to others in both word and deed

Suggested tune: ST DENIO (Welsh)
J Rosenthal

The Nicholas story may be presented as a dramatic reading or memorized. Either way it is to be presented with flourish.

Nicholas

Greetings one and all! Well, well, I have traveled a long distance to be with you, and at last I may sit down and rest my weary feet. I am about 1609 years old you know.

You might ask: where have you come from? I come from where ever children live, little children and bigger children, and even those who are along in years but carry the spirit of childhood in their hearts. From every corner of the world I have come and today I have come to share my gifts with you.

My name is Nicholas. Some call me Kris Kringle, some call me Santa Claus, but my true name is Nicholas. I was born in a small village called Patara in an area you might know as Turkey. I was born in the year of our Lord 300. My parents were very devout Christians and as all good Christian parents they told me the great stories of our Lord and taught me to follow in His footsteps. They died when I was very young (it was very sad) and left me a great deal of money. But I remembered the words of Jesus that they taught me, "Sell what you own and give the money to the poor." So, I did just that: helping the sick and suffering with my wealth. I dedicated my life to the mother Church and in time the Church made me a Bishop, the Bishop of Myra.

The stories that follow might be pantomimed off to one side.

There are many stories that are told about me and the way in which God worked wonders and miracles through my prayers and my hands. Once I was traveling in Greece and in a dream I saw three young students who had been murdered and stuffed into a pickling barrel. When I got up from my sleep I called the innkeeper and together we prayed to God and, lo and behold, the three boys were restored to life and wholeness. For this the Church, that holy and sacred mystery, made me the protector of students and all children.

Another time I was traveling to the Holy Land, that glorious place where our Lord Jesus was born and did so many miracles, praise be to God (*Nicholas looks a bit dreamy*)...now, as I was saying... we were crossing the Mediterranean Sea and a great wind came upon us and we all thought we were going to drown in that great and terrible water. But the words came to my lips and I prayed to our lord Jesus, "Just as the waters of the Galilee were calmed by your words, command these waters to be still and know the wonder of God." And the waters fell silent, praise be to God. And, for this the Church, that holy and sacred mystery, made me the protector of sailors and all people who travel on seas.

My favorite memory is of the young girls who lived in such terrible poverty that their father was unable to support them. When it was time for them to be married, the poor father did not have dowries to give to prospective husbands and, so, as was the custom of that time and place, the father prepared to sell his daughters into slavery. Ah, it placed a burden on my heart and then a thought stirred in my mind.

One night, when the moon was full, I approached the house of the three daughters. In my hands I held three bags filled with gold. Not hearing a sound, for I presumed that they were sleeping, I carefully threw the first, then the second and then the third bag of gold up and through the window of the sleeping sisters. And, then I slipped away. The next morning the father, such a god-fearing man, was heard out in the streets of Myra, "A miracle! It's a miracle!" he shouted, "There was nothing and now this morning there is abundance and happiness in my house. Praise be to God." Truth be told, it warmed my heart to share my gift of gold with these children. And

for this the Church, that holy and sacred mystery, made me the protector of all young girls and of young brides.

But enough with the stories of Nicholas! For there would be no stories about me had it not been for the greatest story ever to be told. There is no St. Nicholas without our Lord Jesus; there are no gifts of the heart without the greatest gift that God has given to the world, himself. So, our storytelling brings us to Bethlehem, to the birth of a child, to a humble cave where heaven reaches down and kisses the earth. It is the story of the gift of Christmas.

So, let us stand and give voice to the wonder of this holy story.

Carol *Prepare the way, O Zion*, Hymnal 1982 #65

The carol suggested is an advent carol. Should another be chosen it is important that it be a rousing tune with a text that anticipates the Christmas story. The hymn should cover the moving of furniture and the placing of scenery.

The nativity scene may be mimed as St. Nicholas tells the story

Nicholas

The story of the first Christmas takes place when the world was filled with darkness. There was violence in the streets and hunger in the bellies of the children. Throughout the land people cried, "Where is God?" The people were looking for a sign from God that He would always be there to look after them.

God did not forget his Covenant with the people for in the fullness of time God spoke to a young woman named Mary and told her that she would bear a son and that his name would be Jesus and that he would be the Son of God and His Kingdom would have no end.

The child was born in Bethlehem, in a humble stable among the animals. Such a birth might have gone unnoticed but God could not keep this birth a secret so he sent angels through the nighttime sky to sing out: *Gloria, Gloria, in Excelsis Deo*. Now, there were shepherds in the fields keeping watch over their sheep and they saw the wonder in the sky and heard the angels who pointed the way for them to go and find the child.

There were others who saw the glory in the heavens, wise Men from the Far East who had been looking for a sign. They saw the brilliance in the skies, left their homes and travelled to find the new born King. And, when they did they offered precious gifts in his honor. But really, the greatest that night was given by God.

This story is just the beginning, the beginning of giving. God begins by giving Himself to the world in the person of Jesus. Mary gives her willingness to be the mother of Jesus. Joseph gives his gift of care-taking this family. The animals give their warmth on a cold night. The angels give their light and their song of praise. The shepherds give their adoration and the wise men their gifts of gold, frankincense, and rich perfume.

Jesus is, of course, God's gift for the world. And Jesus became the gift for the world. All during his life he showered everyone with God's love; ah, just to have been in his presence.

And you know what? He loved the children best of all; so many children he gathered around him; blessing the children.

Carol O come little children

Sung by St. Nicholas, if possible, or a choir-ensemble.

transposed



1. O come, lit - tle chil - dren; be - hold, one and all, Who
2. He lies there, be - fore you, a - sleep in the hay, With
3. A - dore like the shep - herds! Your glad voi - ces raise With



1. lies in the man - ger in Beth - le - hem's stall; For
2. Ma - ry and Jo - seph to guard Him and pray. The
3. those of the an - gels who sing in His praise. Your



1. there, lit - tle child - ren, on this ho - liest night, Our
2. won - der - ing shep - herds look in at the door, And
3. cho - rus will ech - o from earth to the sky, With



1. God sends from heav - en His Son, your de - light.
2. see - ing the In - fant they kneel and a - dore.
3. 'Glo - ry to God in His heav - en most high.

St. Nicholas

Today, Jesus continues to bless God's children all over the world and especially the children of the holy land. He is present with every child in their joys and in their nightmares; in their hunger and their hurts; in their loneliness and the soothing of tears. Jesus is Emmanuel, which means *God with us*.

And the Jesus' greatest gift is that is that we are gift bearers in his name. Like Jesus we reach out to bless the children in our homes and in far away places and especially tonight (today) in the Holy Land.

In my lifetime, my three bags of gold brought freedom and happiness to the three young girls in Myra. Tonight (today) your bags of gold will help an infant in Jerusalem who is was born deaf receive medical treatment so that she can hear. Your bag of gold will allow a seven-year-old boy in Bethlehem to buy shoes so he can walk to school. Your bag of gold will provide a scholarship for a ten-year-old girl in Ramallah so that she will have a future.

You and my good helpers of the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem are going to see the gift of Jesus come alive tonight (today). So let us with great cheer fill our gold bags with treasures for the children of the Holy Land.

Music *Christmas carol of choice*

St. Nicholas gives children three large gold bags which are used for the collection. Or, the collection might be made in gold paper bags that are in the pews and collected by the children. The collection is brought forward and placed on the altar.

Music *Doxology*

Sung by all.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

St. Nicholas

God bless you and Merry Christmas to you all.

Carol *Hark, the herald angels sing*, The Hymnal 1982, #87.